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## Glowing Words Greet NIH As Senate Hearings Open

The powerful appeal of health research, the envy of all other federal research agencies, was again evident last week as the Congressional hearing season for the coming fiscal year opened for the National Institutes of Health.

Recipient of a uniquely plump 5.7 percent budget increase for this year, along with an exemption from the short-term spending bills that rattle large sectors of the federal R&D establishment, NIH eluded the budget cutters in the first year of the so-called Republican revolution. Last week's hearing suggests favorable odds for another good budget, especially with a growing public backlash against cutting the good works of government.

The locale was the hearing room of the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources, an authorizing Committee that shares jurisdiction over NIH with the money-voting Appropriations Committee. Authorizers have declined in importance in the budget-obsessed 104th Congress, but as sources of basic legislation that decrees what is to be done and what may not be done, they are not to be ignored.

Opening the session with a flourish of praise, Committee Chairman Nancy Kassebaum (R-Kansas) hailed NIH as "the jewel in the crown of our federal government." Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.) also went lapidary, referring to NIH as "the jewel in the nation's crown." Mikulski, introduced as "the Senator from NIH," declared that "national health is not a partisan matter."

Senator Bill Frist (R-Tenn.), the only physician in the Senate, said that "NIH is good for the business of the country." Citing an unspecified study, the Senator said that research helps return the sick to productivity, saving \$8 billion to \$12 billion a year. Frist said he felt a responsibility "to assure funding for biomedical research remains strong."

Crediting NIH with major contributions toward increased longevity, Senator Paul Simon (D-Ill.) scornfully stated, "People say government is the enemy." Other Senators chimed in with adulatory remarks.

And then the proceedings moved on to the first witness, NIH Director Harold Varmus, a polished performer in Congressional hearings. Varmus noted that a great deal had been accomplished by NIH since he first came before the Committee for his confirmation hearing three years ago, but for illustrative purposes on this occasion he chose to focus on a particular health problem: obesity.

It's "an unsolved problem," he told the Committee, with a rising death toll that now stands at 300,000. "I have to admit," Varmus said, "that efforts to combat obesity have not been very successful." The Senators, more accustomed to biomedical victory reports than concessions of failure, looked

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## Presidential Turmoil Reigns At Academy of Engineering

The farcical rumble of squabbling chieftains continues at the National Academy of Engineering (NAE), the honorary peak of the profession and chartered adviser to the federal government on weighty issues of technology policy. As a warm-up for the Ringling Brothers & Barnum & Bailey Circus, arriving later this month in Washington, the NAE show is not too bad.

The NAE's President, Harold Liebowitz, was deemed undeserving of confidence in a statement issued February 15 by the governing Council of the NAE's senior partner, the National Academy of Sciences [SGR, March 1]. An insurgent candidate elected last year, at age 71, by a slight majority, Liebowitz has riled the mandarins of the stuffy establishment with his loner tactics, seeming disdain for

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## In Brief

After crawling for two decades toward adoption of the metric system, the US is now backing away, according to a report by the Science Policy Research Division of the Congressional Research Service, in the Library of Congress. The FY 1994-96 money bills for the Department of Transportation "specifically prohibited" funds for metric conversion of highway signs, the report notes, adding that there's a chilly reference to metric in the Unfunded Mandate Reform Act of 1995, which says Washington's directives to the states must be accompanied by money.

*R&D spending in universities rose to \$21 billion in fiscal 1994, NSF reports, a rise of 4 percent in constant dollars. The federal share, \$12.7 billion, or 60 percent of the total, matched that 4 percent increase, while institutional, state, and other sources provided \$8.4 billion, a rise of 3 percent in constant money. Though industrial money on campus receives a lot of attention, it stood at \$1.4 billion in 1994, a one-year increase of \$69 million.*

One hundred universities accounted for 80 percent of all 1994 academic R&D spending, including 83 percent of the federal funds. Continuing at the top was Johns Hopkins, listed at \$784 million in 1994—a figure that includes \$447 million for the Applied Physics Lab, which Hopkins manages for the Navy. The next five: U. of Michigan, \$431 million; U. of Wisconsin, Madison, \$393 million; MIT, \$364 million; Texas A&M, \$356 million, and U. of Washington, \$344 million.

*Erich Bloch, Director of NSF from 1984-90, is leaving the Council on Competitiveness, where he has been a Distinguished Fellow, and will be teaching half time at George Mason University as a Distinguished Visiting Professor.*

## ... Uncertainty Over Who Convenes NAE Council

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close cooperation with the Academy of Sciences, and tireless, wandering loquacity.

Asked to resign by his own governing Council, Liebowitz has barricaded himself behind a set of amateurishly written NAE bylaws that contain no provisions for removal of the President. Liebowitz took office July 1, and he says he plans to serve the full six-year term.

NAE Vice President Morris Tanenbaum, a retired AT&T executive, told SGR last week that the Council would like to assemble to discuss the removal of Liebowitz, but "the President [i.e., Liebowitz] is directly involved in calling meetings," and he hasn't issued a call. Tanenbaum said the matter is under study by lawyers engaged by the NAE Council.

Liebowitz told SGR that he has his own lawyers on the case. As for calling a meeting of the NAE Council, he merely said, "The Council has not yet met," adding that "the President is supposed to call the Council meetings." He declined to reply when asked whether he would call a meeting.

The bylaws, dating back to the creation of the NAE in 1964 as a close affiliate of the Academy of Sciences, are blank on the matter of who calls the regular meetings of the Council. The bylaws specify a Council meeting to coincide with the annual fall meeting of the full Academy, plus "at least three other meetings per year with the time and place of each meeting set forth in a written notice to all members of the Council at least ten days prior to the date of each meeting."

The provision does not specify who is to issue the "written notice." The bylaws also state that the Council "shall hold such special meetings as the chairman, or the president, or three members of the Council by written request to the president, may call, at such time and place and for such purpose as is designated by the president."

The bylaws state that the President is the "full-time chief executive officer of the Academy ... subject to the general policies established by the Council."

Somewhat short of the precision associated with the engineering profession, it vaguely adds: "In general, the president shall have all the powers and duties of supervision and management usually vested in the office of the president and chief executive officer of any institution of this character, with the sole exception of those duties reserved for the chairman"—who presides over the Council.

Though disdained by his colleagues and relieved of his duties and salary as Vice Chairman of the National Research Council (NRC), Liebowitz told SGR last week that he is "following the platform" of his election campaign, which stressed wider participation of the membership in Academy activities. Referring to the platform, he said, "Some people don't like it," but, he added, the criticisms stated against him have been "very general—nothing specific." Regarding the

termination of the NRC portion of his salary, he cryptically said, "I leave that to other people to decide."

Liebowitz has been criticized for going to federal agencies to raise money for NAE activities, in violation of the custom of the two academies working closely and conducting their federal work through the National Research Council. "They got the wrong information," Liebowitz said of his critics, adding, "I said that if I got money from the government, it would go to the NRC."

He also said that he had been unjustly criticized for appointing a fellow to the NAE staff, "on loan from George Mason University. They said we didn't go through the process," Liebowitz asserted, apparently referring to NAE appointment procedures. The fellow, he said, "is helping out." Liebowitz also said that he has been working to improve access of women and minority members to engineering careers.

The disorder at the NAE inspired a harsh letter of criticism for Liebowitz last month from an influential source, John R. Moore, a retired Northrup Corp. executive and Chairman of a President's Transition Advisory Committee appointed by Liebowitz to assist him in taking office. Referring to the February 15 NAE Council meeting—at which Liebowitz was asked to and refused to resign—as "a fiasco," Moore accused Liebowitz of "failure to heed my repeated advice."

In a long list of alleged misdeeds, he assailed Liebowitz for "attempting to get government contracts, to the detriment of relations with the NRC," and of "failure to treat the staff in such a way that they can work effectively and without fear for their future job security." Moore warned that the publicity arising from conflict within the NAE "will have very negative effects on the prestige and fund raising abilities of the NAE and, perhaps, the whole Academy Complex."

Announcing his resignation as Chairman of the Transition Committee, Moore urged Liebowitz to resign "for the good of the Academy," its members "and your own best interest." Liebowitz declined the invitation, and, SGR hears, has persuaded Moore to remain as Chairman. The President of the NAE says he's sure that the dispute around him is bound to go away.—DSG

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## ... Too Many Congressional Mandates, Varmus Says

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properly glum, and then moved on to a question and answer period with the NIH Director.

Kassebaum sought information on the fiscal plight of academic health centers, battered by cost-cutting managed-care programs and increasingly tight-fisted federal health programs. Varmus said NIH was striving to conserve money so that more would be available for support of extramural programs.

Mikulski wanted to know whether NIH had arrived at the "steady state" dolefully described by Varmus last year in a Shattuck Lecture prior to the unexpected turnaround in Bethesda's budgetary fortunes on Capitol Hill. Referring to the Committee's legislative authority, Mikulski asked, "What's needed to cope with the plateau?" adding as an afterthought, "Is there a plateau?"

Varmus replied, "Inevitably there will be a steady state. Growth can't go on forever." Because of this, he continued, NIH must "do better priority setting," and cut administrative costs and reporting requirements for grantees. Stepping into sensitive territory, he added that it would be beneficial for NIH to have "as few earmarks as possible"—a reference to the hallowed Congressional practice of dictating research programs on particular diseases, often at the request of afflicted constituents.

Mikulski wanted to know whether the system was over-producing biomedical scientists.

Varmus said, "I am aware of the discomfort that exists in the community of young scientists." But, he noted, alternative job opportunities are increasingly available for science graduates. The glut issue did not receive further attention in Varmus's testimony. However, his prepared statement for the hearing indicated a determination to keep up the output of the PhD system.

Stating that "the momentum of recent scientific progress and our international leadership in medical research depends on the continued production of new, highly trained investigators," he said: "We do not plan to reduce our efforts to recruit new investigators, especially from under-represented sectors of the population, or to curtail our training programs for graduate and post-graduate students."

Mikulski returned to obesity, noting that at a school reunion she recently attended "all the cheerleaders were 30-40 pounds overweight." She noted that there's "no national institute on obesity, no office." The Congressionally inspired addition of institutes to NIH's already sprawling collection being a touchy matter with NIH management, Mikulski quickly added, "I'm not saying we should have one," though, as she noted, in the past, pressure groups have succeeded in establishing new institutes.

In a manner that suggested that there are no two sides to this question, Varmus quickly answered, "We have enough institutes and offices at the moment." With the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases as

the lead institute, he said, many other components of NIH are working on obesity.

Mikulski asked whether Congress was imposing too many mandates on NIH.

"Yes," Varmus replied.

In the course of a long and circuitous preface to a question, Senator Dan Coats (R-Ind.) described himself as "increasingly in thought synch with the Senator from Maryland," and then wondered whether NIH might be risking duplication of efforts in its dispersed research programs on obesity.

Varmus explained that the complexities of obesity required a diversity of scientific skills, including behavioral science.

Coats, who chairs an Armed Services Subcommittee, spoke approvingly of the Pentagon's efforts to harmonize the procurement needs of the military services, and wondered whether NIH might not profit from a consultation with the managers of that activity.

Varmus said that he had looked into DOD methods, and doubted they were appropriate for NIH.

Coats returned to Congressional mandates, saying that he agreed that they're a burden on NIH.

NIH welcomes suggestions, Varmus said, adding that "we like to know what's on the public's mind." But, he said, problems arise when Congress attaches dollars to specific mandates.

Senator Paul Wellstone (D-Minn.) said his late father suffered from Parkinson's disease. "It drained him of dignity," Wellstone said, and caused him to welcome death. Looking into NIH funding for Parkinson's research, he continued, he found that it had been constant since 1989. "I don't see much of a commitment," the Senator sadly remarked.

Varmus turned to the complexities of NIH funding, noting that the "scoring of dollars" for grants on a particular area of research can create a misleading impression of commitment. Results, he said, will also come from research on nerves and cells "not characterized" as Parkinson's research.

Varmus recalled that a workshop was held last year by the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke to prepare a plan for research. Wellstone asked whether the Parkinson's researchers felt they had enough money. Varmus said he understood they were satisfied, adding that he had received "no appeals."

Senator Judd Gregg (R-New Hampshire) asked how NIH was getting along with "steady state" finances.

Varmus replied that with the 5.7 percent increase from Congress, NIH was "doing better than steady state."

Gregg then wanted to know whether the new clinical research hospital planned for the NIH campus "is going to be called the Kassebaum institute."

Varmus deftly replied, "We're not committed."

## Heads of Physics Society Clash with Academy Plan

The National Academy of Sciences' big push for a fundamental revamping of federal science policy has at last received a hearing on Capitol Hill. Though congenial, the proceedings were accompanied by an uninvited dissent, partial but strong, from the top two officials of the American Physical Society—providing a rare case of public discord between two institutional pillars of the establishment.

The Academy was wrong, the APS officials stated, in calling for preferential treatment of universities by federal research agencies, and it also erred, they contended, in recommending that science and technology should be sifted out from the broader, standard budget category of research and development.

The Academy plan, titled *Allocating Federal Funds for Science and Technology*, is generally referred to as the Press plan, after the Chairman of the NAS committee that produced it last November, Frank Press, retired President of the Academy [SGR, December 1: "Science Academy Offers Plan for Coping With Austerity"].

Basically it calls for a close examination of the federal research and development budget, now about \$70 billion, to identify science and technology, as distinguished from hardware development, prototype testing and other items that are lumped together under R&D and mainly concentrated in the Departments of Defense and Energy and NASA. The true science and technology portion, Press and colleagues estimated, is probably \$35 billion to \$40 billion.

The report also called for White House preparation of an integrated S&T budget covering all federal agencies, stricter reviews to eliminate low-quality programs, tighter limits on federal laboratories working outside the missions of their parent agencies, and a presumption in favor of supporting university-based research. The rationale for the academic preference is that it combines the conduct of research with training in competitive conditions that help promote quality.

As he has in various other forums since the report was issued, Press argued the merits of the proposal February 28 before the House Science Committee, accompanied by two members of his committee, Marye Anne Fox, Vice President for Research, University of Texas, Austin, and Richard J. Mahoney, retired CEO of Monsanto Co.

But the most interesting act of the day was performed by two men who weren't there, J. Robert Schrieffer, President of the American Physical Society, who is Chief Scientist of the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory, Florida State University, and D. Allan Bromley, APS President-elect, who is Dean of Engineering at Yale University. The Florida lab is a major facility jointly financed by the National Science Foundation and the State of Florida. Bromley served as White House Science Advisor under President Bush, a post that Press held in the Carter Administration.

While expressing agreement with most of the recommendations in the Press report, the Schrieffer-Bromley statement was emphatic in its dissents. The recommended preference

for financing research in academic institutions, the statement said, "is based on the specious assumption that universities and national laboratories have similar capabilities and address similar problems."

Universities perform well at linking research, education and training, it continued, "but they are ill-equipped to pursue large, complex projects for which the national laboratories, with their many outstanding and costly user facilities, are ideally suited.

"Rather than pitting universities against national laboratories," the APS statement asserted, "we believe that the federal government should reinforce cooperation between the two sets of institutions."

In their other dissent, concerning creation of a separate science and technology budget distinct from the R&D budget, the APS officials warned that the proposed division "would erect an artificial barrier between sets of activities that are closely related. It would also prevent the practical reallocation of resources from one set of activities to the other as defense and civilian requirements vary."

Seeming undiscouraged, Press is continuing the campaign for adoption of the principles in the report. He told the Science Committee that the American Association for the Advancement of Science and others are working to define a federal science and technology budget, and that plans are under way for "test driving" our recommendations."

He also said that the recommendations concerning university preference and the roles of federal labs had generated misunderstanding. "The [Academy] Committee was simply saying," he explained in a prepared statement, "that if one integrates the many special features of research done at academic institutions with the purposes of federal investments in science and technology, then the conclusion of a bias toward support of academic institutions is inescapable. That bias may indeed result in increases for academic institutions vis-a-vis other research performers."

"If that happens because the Committee's guidance has been followed, including its affirmation of the major contributions of the highest quality made by many federal laboratories," Press stated, "then the consequences will be the strongest possible science and technology within static or even declining overall federal budgets."

The problem faced by Press and company is that the present system of distributing funds for research and development, including science and technology, is mature and politically well-rooted. Everyone is for strong R&D and S&T, but no one is willing to give up anything, and neither Congress nor the White House possesses the political power to remake the system in any substantial way—even if agreement could be reached on what to do.

Furthermore, where technology blends into economics and politics, strong differences of opinion exist on the wise way to go. For example, the Clinton Administration enthused

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## A New Try to Breathe Life Into a Foundation for NIH

A serious effort is under way to create a new and unusual source of financial assistance for the National Institutes of Health by activating a non-profit foundation that has been dormant and forgotten ever since it was authorized by Congress in 1993.

The aim is to raise money and bring into operation an entity that now exists only on the statute books, the National Foundation for Biomedical Research, chartered by Congress to serve as a helpmate for NIH.

Under its Congressional statute, the foundation is barred from transferring money to NIH, but exists "solely to work in collaboration with the research programs of the National Institutes of Health." In plain terms—if it gets off the ground—it's to raise money for activities that NIH considers desirable but finds beyond its reach for financial or other reasons.

Heading the attempt to get it going, with the blessings of NIH Director Harold Varmus, is a recent retiree from the senior ranks of NIH, George Galasso, former Associate Director for Extramural Research. Working on a voluntary basis, Galasso recently moved to an office in the Cloisters, an annex of the money-drenched Howard Hughes Medical Institute on the NIH campus in Bethesda, Md. Hughes, of course, could easily put the foundation in fiscal clover, but no one associated with the undertaking was willing to discuss financial sources of any kind.

The dollar potential for the foundation, though unknown at this point, is bound to be small in relation to NIH's current annual budget of nearly \$12 billion. But, coming from a non-governmental source, the money could be used in flexible ways not permissible with federal funds—for example, for high-salaried endowed appointments to the staff of NIH, where pay scales lag behind the super-star rates of elite universities.

A step ahead of NIH, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has for several years been the beneficiary of a similarly chartered body, the National Foundation for the Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention, an Atlanta-

### Press Report *(Continued from Page 4)*

siastically favors federal subsidies for the "upstream" development of high-risk commercial technologies. Press, however, is cool toward that line of work. In an article in the *New York Times* December 30, he wrote, "As a last resort, the Government should provide some cost-sharing only when the private sector is reluctant to invest in an important new technology because of the gamble involved."

Press speaks unalloyed good sense when he argues that with strict quality standards, the present volume of money could comfortably underpin excellence in all important fields of science and technology. He's banking on the triumph of reason over institutional and regional advantage and plain old politics. But as money gets tighter, the battle for shares becomes more selfish and intense.

based non-profit organization created in 1992 to help the CDC. The CDC foundation, which began operations in 1994, has received a total of \$5 million in several grants from the Robert W. Woodruff Foundation, an Atlanta philanthropy, plus two \$500,000 support grants from the CDC.

The Director of the CDC foundation, Charlie Stokes, described it to SGR as "a fund-seeking agency" that supports activities of the CDC and its partners. The foundation, Stokes said, "works in areas where the CDC lacks money," among them a youth fitness and nutrition program and international disease monitoring activities. "We're separate from the CDC but close to them," he explained. Stokes said salary competition is probably more of a problem for NIH than it is for the CDC, and that his foundation has not felt a need to get into that area.

Under their federal statutes, the CDC and NIH foundations must confine their philanthropy to their particular federal agencies. But within that limitation, they possess virtually unlimited authority in choice of activities, and a great deal more flexibility than federal agencies are allowed.

The statute establishing the NIH-linked foundation allows financing of "endowed positions that are associated with the research program" of NIH. The legislation states that the "endowments may be expended for compensation of individuals holding the positions, for staff, equipment, quarters, travel, and other expenditures that are appropriate in supporting the endowed positions."

In addition, the foundation is authorized to support international scientific collaboration, fellowships, accredited educational programs from undergraduate through postdoctoral levels, and "programs for the general public which promote the understanding of science."

Following passage of the 1993 act authorizing the NIH foundation, Benno Schmidt, the New York financier and medical philanthropist, was appointed chairman of its board. The board met in 1994, and never again. A \$200,000 startup fund authorized for the initial two years of the foundation was never appropriated. Schmidt's term as chairman expired in October.

Galasso said the first steps will be appointment of a new Chairman, incorporation, and adoption of bylaws. "Once it's legally established," he told SGR, "we'll try to raise money."

### Tech-Transfer Bill Signed

The National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act of 1995, latest in a long string of statutes aimed at increasing the commercial payoff from research in federal labs, was signed by the President on March 8. The bill (HR 2196), introduced by Rep. Connie Morella (R-Md.), whose district includes NIH and NIST, raises the royalty maximum for federal researchers from the present \$100,000 to \$150,000, and reduces some administrative steps in the use of Cooperative Research and Development Agreements.

## New Computer Data Base Inventories Federal R&D

A vast computer data base encompassing virtually all unclassified research financed by the federal government has been compiled by a support agency for the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and is coming into use as a management tool at OSTP and elsewhere.

As is the custom in the information industry, this one, too, is touted as unprecedented in scope and power. But, in fact, there's nothing like it for quickly identifying who's doing what and where and at what cost in federally financed R&D.

The data base, covering over 200,000 awards by 21 federal departments and agencies in fiscal years 1993-95, has been produced by a branch of RAND, the Washington-based Critical Technologies Institute, established in 1992 as a support agency for OSTP. Titled RaDiUS, for research and development in the US, it is up and running after nearly three years of development. Access is on a password basis through the World Wide Web with a Netscape browser.

The Director of the RaDiUS project, Donna Fossum, of RAND, told SGR last week that it has passed beyond the "beta" testing stage and is now in operation at OSTP, and soon to be made available to other federal agencies, and then to non-government organizations on a fee basis. She said

RAND has spent about \$1.5 million developing the system. The data have been "harvested," she said, from the various accounting systems of the individual agencies and put into uniform shape for entry into the data base.

An inquiry about a particular type of research will produce references to the sponsoring agency and bureau, the program into which the research fits, summary and identification codes of the project, location, names of investigators, and budget. A search for government-supported research on construction techniques, for example, turned up 888 grants and contracts among over a dozen government agencies.

An OSTP staff member described the system as very useful—but more so for management than for budgetmaking. Referring to the autonomy of federal research agencies, he said, "We have 22 chimneys that don't talk to each other." Duplication can be useful for taking different approaches to a problem, he said, but it's also useful to communicate about research with similar goals.

Fossum, formerly with the Office of Management and Budget and the National Science Foundation, is at RAND's Washington office: 2100 M St. NW, Washington, DC 20037; tel. 202/296-5000.

## Congress Finds It Needs OTA Director for Two Final Chores

Congress decided last summer that it can get along without the Office of Technology Assessment. But now it finds that it can't get along without the Director of the Office of Technology Assessment.

And so Roger Herdman, the chief of OTA when Congress voted it a shut-down budget, has been temporarily summoned back to service, after closing up shop in mid-February and moving on to a scholar-in-residence appointment at the Institute of Medicine, the health-policy arm of the National Academy of Sciences.

The federal government needs an OTA Director to perform two little-known tasks that Congress assigned to the

but Medicare bills are deadlocked in controversy between the White House and Congress.

"I thought I was leaving," Herdman told SGR last week, but then someone noticed that the PROPAC and PPRC expirations were approaching. Herdman said he was asked by several Congressional committees with Medicare jurisdiction to retain his title as OTA Director and make the appointments, a slow and cumbersome process, as such things go in the federal system. Seeking a political okay before accepting the task, Herdman did the best he could, by consulting Rep. Amo Houghton (R-NY), who would be chairman of the OTA Congressional Board if there were an OTA.

OTA didn't welcome the appointments honor when Congress assigned it there, and at times tried to shed it as inappropriate for a policy-research organization. But there it remains. And so, in fact, does OTA, in a legal sense. Congress chose a fiscal route in terminating OTA—just cutting off its money, except for close-down costs and severance pay. The Technology Assessment Act of 1972, which established OTA, remains intact.

In his revived role as Director of OTA, Herdman will receive his former salary, \$123,100, drawn from funds remaining in the close-down fund. And he has temporarily put off his appointment at the Institute of Medicine. "I can't be Director of OTA and a scholar-in-residence at the IOM at the same time," he wryly remarked, adding that he's eager to finish up OTA's last bit of business and get on with other things.

**OTA Legacy.** OTA's 20-year output of studies, is available on five CD-ROMs (GPO Stock No. 052-003-01457-2; \$23); order from: Superintendent of Documents, USGPO, PO Box 371954, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15250-7974; tel. 202/512-1800; fax 202/512-2250.

occupant of that position over a decade ago for lack of any other place to put them.

By law, the OTA Director makes the appointments to two important bodies in the fiscal operations of Medicare—the Prospective Payments Assessment Commission (PROPAC), which sets hospital rates, and the Physician Payment Review Commission (PPRC), which sets doctors fees.

Under a system of three-year rotating terms, PROPAC memberships expire on March 31, and the PPRC's on April 30. Legislation is required to reassign the responsibilities,

# In Print

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## From Taxpayers Against Fraud, The False Claims Act Legal Center:

*False Claims Act and Qui Tam Quarterly Review* (66 pp., no charge), valuable reading for "whistleblowers" in misdeeds involving federal funding, this publication focuses on court decisions, news reports, etc., concerning the provision of the federal False Claims Act known as *qui tam*, Latin shorthand for he who brings legal action for king and self. For successful complainants, who can be legally represented by the government or their own counsel, this can be immensely profitable financially, since *qui tam* can lead to treble damages and a 15 to 25 percent share for the whistleblower. The *qui tam* process is unrelated to misconduct regulation within federal research agencies, and science purists regard it as an unwanted legalistic intrusion into the governance of research. But its use is growing, in research-related and other sectors. Since the False Claims Act was beefed up in 1986, the Legal Center reports, the federal government has recovered over \$1 billion in fraud judgments, including a few in the research area that yielded personal rewards totaling several million dollars. In response to SGR's inquiry, a senior federal official concerned with policing scientific misconduct spoke well of the Legal Center, a non-profit organization, founded in 1986, and financed by recoveries in fraud cases. With four attorneys on its staff, the Center provides legal assistance for *qui tam* plaintiffs and counsel, and serves as an information fount in this area of law.

**Order from:** Taxpayers Against Fraud, The False Claims Act Legal Center, 1250 Connecticut Ave NW, Suite 401, Washington, DC 20036; tel. 202/296-4826; fax 202/296-4838.

## From the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU):

*Year Book: 1996* (487 pp., \$70), lists the hundreds of national academies, research councils, societies, institutes, and various agencies affiliated with ICSU, established in 1931 to promote research around the world. Included are the charters of many of the organizations, officers' names and addresses, meeting dates, etc.

**Order from:** Portland Press Ltd., Commerce Way, Whitehall Industrial Estate, Attn. Mrs. S. Day, Colchester CO2 8HP, United Kingdom; tel. (44 1206) 796-351; fax (44 1206) 799-331; e-mail: sales@portlandpress.co.uk

## From the National Academy of Sciences:

*Affordable Cleanup? Opportunities for Cost Reduction in the Decontamination and Decommissioning of the Nation's Uranium Enrichment Facilities* (309 pp., \$39, plus \$4 for shipping), another round of wildly gyrating cost estimates for cleaning up the residue of the nuclear age, in this case the decontamination and decommissioning of the uranium-enrichment facilities at Oak Ridge, Tennessee; Paducah, Kentucky, and Portsmouth, Ohio. The Academy study, commissioned by Congress in 1992, notes that a 1991

estimate of \$46 billion was subsequently reduced to \$16.1 billion. Citing the \$160 million cost of cleaning up Britain's Capenhurst plant, the report says the "hundredfold" difference in the estimate for the US plants cannot be accounted for by the far smaller scale of the UK facility. With simplified, centralized management, elimination of plans for constructing new buildings for clean-up operations, and commercial recycling of recovered waste materials, "potential cost savings could exceed 50 percent" of the \$16.1 billion estimate, the report says. Dale F. Stein, President Emeritus of Michigan Technological University, chaired the committee that wrote the report.

**Order from:** National Academy Press, 2101 Constitution Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20418; tel. 1-800/624-6242 or 202/334-3313.

## From the American Institute of Physics (AIP):

*Overcoming Inertia: High School Physics in the 1990s* (65 pp., no charge), says that "after a long period of relative stagnation," high school physics enrollments have moved up a bit in recent years, according to a survey of 3600 schools. From 1987-93, the proportion of seniors currently or previously enrolled in physics courses rose from 19 to 22 percent (20 to 24 percent with private school students included)—approximately where enrollments stood in the early 1970s. And teacher preparation is not as bad as is commonly believed, says the report. The improvements have been achieved with "large and sustained expenditures of energy and money," the report states, but it concludes: "It is questionable whether the current budgetary climate will allow the often heroic efforts of the past decade to continue." Michael Neuschatz and Lori Alpert wrote the report.

**Order from:** American Institute of Physics, Education and Employment Statistics Division, One Physics Ellipse, College Park, Md. 20740; tel. 301/209-3070; fax 301/209-0843.

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# In Print

Official reports and other publications of special interest to the research community

*(Copies of publications listed here are available from the indicated sources—not from SGR)*

**From the White House, National Science and Technology Council:**

**Meeting the Challenge: A Research Agenda for America's Health, Safety, and Food** (54 pp., no charge), outlines programs that might be undertaken by federal research and regulatory agencies, if their political bosses allow them the money and freedom. Items on the list include creation of a Presidential Early Career Scientist Award for young investigators; speedier collection and analysis of nutrition, health and environmental data; vaccine development, and promotion of technologies to improve food safety. But, playing it politically safe in these uncertain times, a killjoy end note cautions that "this document does not represent the final determinant in an overall Administration budget decision making process. The research programs presented in this report will have to compete for resources against many other high priority federal programs." The report emanates from the Committee on Health, Safety, and Food of the National Science and Technology Council, consisting of chiefs of federal S&T agencies, serviced by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

**Order from:** Office of Science and Technology Policy, Science Division, attn. Ms. Diaz, Executive Office of the President, Washington, DC 20502; tel. 202/456-6130; fax 202/456-6026; Internet: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/NSTC>

**From the National Science Foundation:**

**Federal R&D Funding by Budget Function: Fiscal Years 1994-96** (NSF 95-342; 50 pp., no charge), 26 detailed tables tracking the money according to purpose and governmental source. Gathered early in the last Congressional session, the fiscal 1996 numbers are proposed rather than appropriated—with some still tied up in budget deadlock. But, whatever the final figures, the report has it right in noting that, with inflation taken into account, overall R&D purchasing power this year is going down. Ronald L. Meeks is the principal author of the report.

**Order from:** NSF, Division of Science Resources Studies, Publications Unit, Suite 965, Arlington, Va. 22230-9966; tel. 703/306-1130; fax 703/644-4278; for instructions on electronic access: 703/306-0214.

**From the Science Policy Research Division, Congressional Research Service, part of the Library of Congress, no charge:**

**Government Performance and Results Act [GPRA], PL103-62: Revised Status Report, February 1996** (96-198 SPR, 67 pp.), a review of legislatively mandated steps toward an intended revolution in government operations—about which few in the research community seem to be aware.

Enacted in 1993, the GPRA specified a seven-year timetable for the adoption of performance measures, strategic plans, goal setting and other managerial devices by virtually all federal agencies. The report, by Genevieve J. Knezo, notes that 75 pilot projects, involving \$50 billion, are in progress and summarizes some of the early findings.

**US Industrial R&D: Trends and Analysis** (96-90 SPR, 26 pp.) reports that industrial R&D spending remained flat in 1993-94 following an average annual growth of 7 percent from 1975-85. However, noting increased industry collaborations with academe and government, declines in industrial support of basic research, and other shifts in the industrial R&D, the report observes, "It is not clear that lower R&D spending results in less productive research and development or fewer innovations." Wendy Schacht is the author.

Order through a House or Senate member. Senate switchboard, 202/224-3121; House, 202/225-3121. Cite the Congressional Research Service as the source, with report title and number.

**From NASA, Office of Space Access and Technology: Space Technology Innovation** (bimonthly magazine, no charge), reports on transfers of space technologies to private firms and public agencies, noting that last year "2700 new technologies emerged" from NASA contracts, grants and agreements, and that many of these "have been assessed as having commercial potential." The March-April issue (20 pp.) tells of the application of space technology applied to recycling of tires, lists awards under NASA's share of the Small Business Innovation Research program, and describes other commercially aimed programs linked to space research. Included is a list, with names and phone numbers, of organizations that provide guidance to NASA technology-transfer opportunities.

**Order from:** NASA, Office of Space Access and Technology, Code XC, Washington, DC 20546-0001; tel. 202/358-4562; fax 202/358-3878.

**From the American Association for the Advancement of Science:**

**Competitiveness in Academic Research** (253 pp., \$17.56 for AAAS members; \$21.95 for others), seven papers ruminating on the nature, meaning and value of competitiveness in universities. The precipitating cause for this NSF-financed exercise is NSF's crumb-sharing program for the have-not states, EPSCoR—Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research. Started in 1979, and now present in a score of states, EPSCoR is funded this year at a mere \$30 million, a bit less than one percent of NSF's budget. The most illuminating paper, by W. Henry Lambright, of Syracuse University, nicely relates the tangled EPSCoR experiences in Mississippi, Alabama, Oklahoma, Maine and Montana. The other authors are Susan Cozzens, Irwin Feller, Roger Geiger, J. David Roessner, David Dill, and co-authors Katherine Gramp and Albert Teich, editor of the collection.

**Order from:** AAAS, PO Box 521, Annapolis Junction, Md. 20701; tel. 1-800/222-7809; fax 301/206-9789.

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